

Tenant Improvements

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A DDES Customer Information Bulletin



King County Department of Development and Environmental Services
900 Oakesdale Avenue Southwest Renton, Washington 98055-1219

<http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/>

Frequently Asked Questions

King County DDES has created customer information bulletins to inform the general public about the effect of codes and regulations on their projects. These bulletins are not intended to be complete statements of all laws and rules and should not be used as substitutes for them. If conflicts and questions arise, current codes and regulations are final authority. Because the codes and regulations may be revised or amended at any time, consult King County staff to be sure you understand all requirements before beginning work. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the project meets all requirements of applicable codes and regulations.

This bulletin answers common questions about Tenant Improvement Permits, Certificates of Occupancy, and Shell Modification Permits. To obtain further information, or to obtain a permit, contact the Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) at 206-296-6600.

What is a tenant improvement permit?

A Tenant Improvement Permit is required for completing, remodeling, or altering a space within an existing building. The process of obtaining this permit involves three major stages:

- ◆ Plans are submitted and reviewed for applicable code requirements
- ◆ A permit is then issued to do the work shown on the plans
- ◆ When the work has been completed and inspected, a Certificate of Occupancy is issued

What is a Certificate of Occupancy?

The Uniform Building Code (UBC) classifies all buildings by type of "occupancy" or use. The 1997 UBC (effective July 1, 1998) is the version currently in use. There are many classifications in the UBC, but they all fall into 10 general categories:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| ◆ A—Assembly | ◆ I—Institutional |
| ◆ B—Business | ◆ M—Mercantile |
| ◆ E—Educational | ◆ R—Residential |
| ◆ F—Factory and Industry | ◆ S—Storage |
| ◆ H—Hazardous | ◆ U—Utility |

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A Certificate of Occupancy is issued to identify a building or individual tenant space has been inspected by the building official and no code violations have been found.

Note: Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy cannot be construed as approval of a violation of the provisions of the building codes and/or other ordinances and regulations of King County.

For new commercial or industrial construction, a separate Certificate of Occupancy or letter of shell completion (see below) is issued after the building passes final inspection. In multiple tenant buildings, a Certificate of Occupancy is required for each tenant space, with the exception of R-1 (apartment) occupancies. Many buildings are constructed before actual tenants are found or improvements are planned. These are called shell buildings. A letter of shell completion is issued upon inspection approval of all required work related to the shell permit. Separate Tenant Improvement Permits are required for all spaces in a shell building that will be occupied.

What is a Shell Modification Permit?

A Shell Modification Permit is required to change some element of the structure. Examples of this are addition of a new fascia, structural changes to the building, or redesign of a stair system. This type of permit does not result in Certificate of Occupancy or grant approval for a new tenant.

What if I am moving into a space that was occupied by another tenant?

A Tenant Improvement Permit may not be required if you are moving into an existing space that has a Certificate of Occupancy and you are not changing the character of the occupancy. If you want to qualify for this provision, the space must retain the same occupancy classification and use designated on the Certificate of Occupancy. The space configuration and exiting must also remain the same. For more information, contact a commercial building or fire inspector at 206-296-6615.

Change of use and building additions

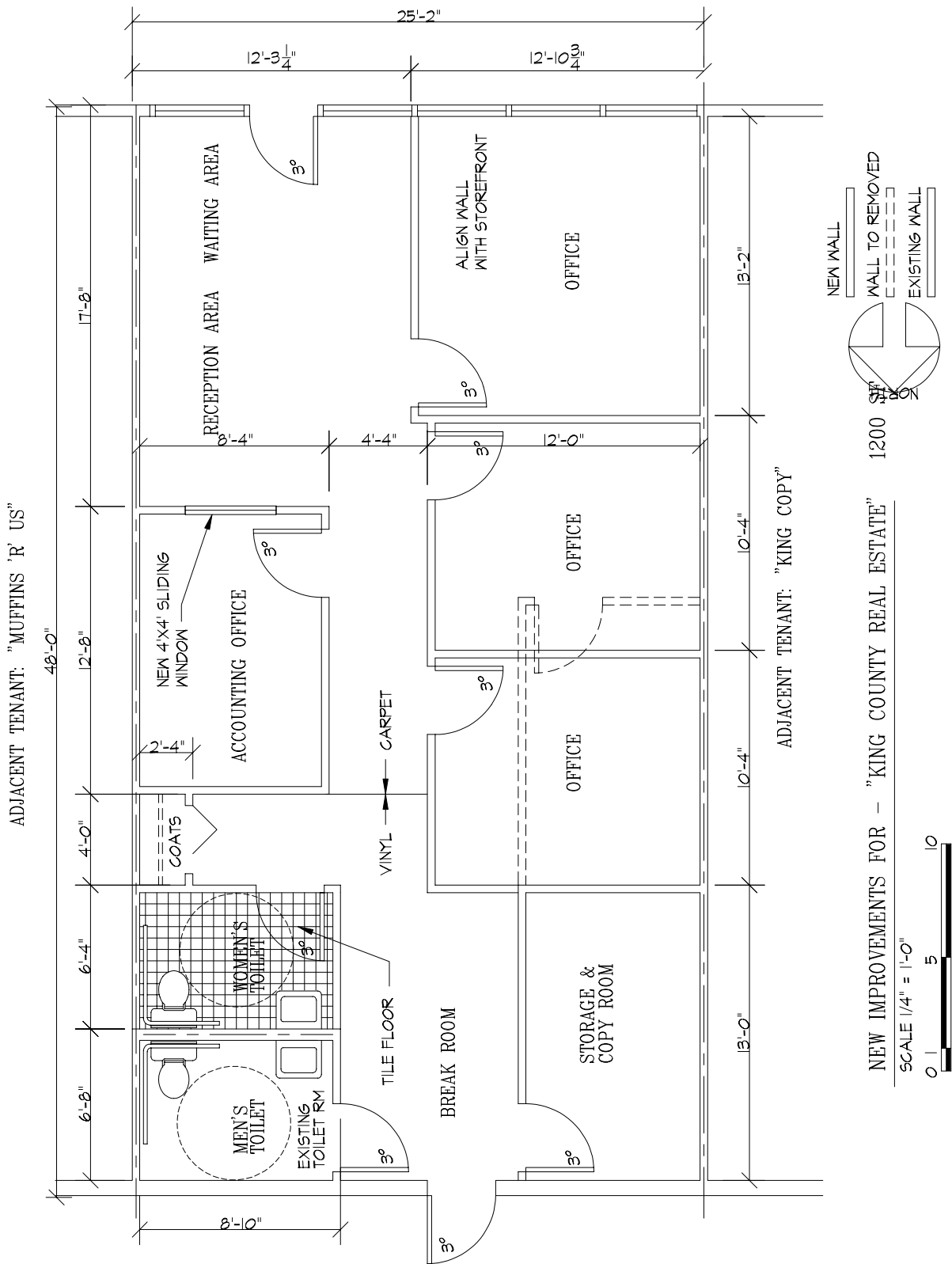
If you are changing the use of a building or tenant space or adding onto a building, you may need to fulfill requirements not discussed in this bulletin. Changing the use may result in changes in the number of required parking spaces and changes to the building to meet additional building and fire code requirements. Requirements for new construction and additions are described in Bulletin #8, *Commercial and Multi-family Building Permits*. Parking requirements are included in King County Code (K.C.C.) chapter 21A.18, and other zoning requirements may be found in subsequent chapters of the Zoning Code, Title 21A.

What must I do to apply for a Tenant Improvement or a Shell Modification Permit?

1. The application for a Tenant Improvement or a Shell Modification Permit should include three copies (on 8-1/2 x 11-inch paper) of the complete legal description of the property, consistent with the site plan.
2. Three sets of plans must be included. Four sets are required if the application is for a food-handling establishment within one of these categories: schools, churches, restaurants, groceries, mini-markets, hospitals, taverns, or nursing homes. The King County Department of Public Health is given the fourth set. The sets of plans should consist of the following items:
 - (a) Cover sheet including the following:

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- ◆ A clear statement describing the scope of the work to be done
 - ◆ The value of the work
 - ◆ The tenant's name and mailing address
 - ◆ The applicant or contact person's name, mailing address, and the phone number
 - ◆ The type of business and proposed business name
 - ◆ Property tax account number
 - ◆ The permit or application number for any permits related to the tenant space or shell
 - ◆ The building construction type and occupancy classification
 - ◆ The specific information about the building (whether it is sprinklered, alarmed, monitored, or has fixed systems, etc.)
 - ◆ The square footage of the tenant space
 - ◆ The method of heating (electrical, gas, etc.)
 - ◆ The method of lighting equipment compliance used when adding or replacing lighting fixtures (prescriptive option or lighting power allowance option)
- (b) Site plan (see example drawing 2) that matches the legal description, including the following:
- ◆ Location of all property boundary lines, buildings, parking, and driveways
 - ◆ North directional arrow
 - ◆ Location of the tenant space within the building
- (c) Architectural plans (see example drawings 1, 2, & 3), drawn to scale, with dimensions indicated, and as a group showing the following:
- ◆ The scales used
 - ◆ The floor plan of existing space, when demolition is proposed
 - ◆ The floor plans of proposed space (including walls, doors, door swings, fixed equipment, and fixtures) that differentiate those proposed from the existing construction
 - ◆ The uses of all areas identified, including the uses of adjacent tenant spaces
 - ◆ The room and floor finishes (carpet, vinyl, paint, etc.)
 - ◆ The size of doors and proposed fire-resistive rating when rating is required
 - ◆ The section through corridor construction when corridor is required to be 1-hour fire resistive
 - ◆ The details or cross-sections of walls and ceilings
 - ◆ The barrier-free accessibility to and within the space

Note: Full barrier-free accessibility compliance is not required in buildings constructed before 1976 that are not substantially remodeled or rehabilitated and have no change of use.

- ◆ Any storage use in excess of 12 feet in height
- ◆ The uses, storage, or processing of flammable or combustible liquids or hazardous materials
- ◆ The lighting and switching plans showing compliance with the Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) lighting and switching provisions when lighting fixtures are to be added, indicating fixture wattages.
- ◆ The compliance with the WSEC, where any changes are being made to the thermal envelope of the building

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SITE PLAN

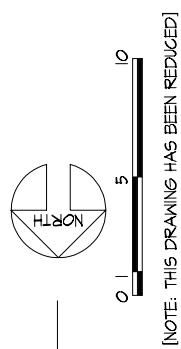
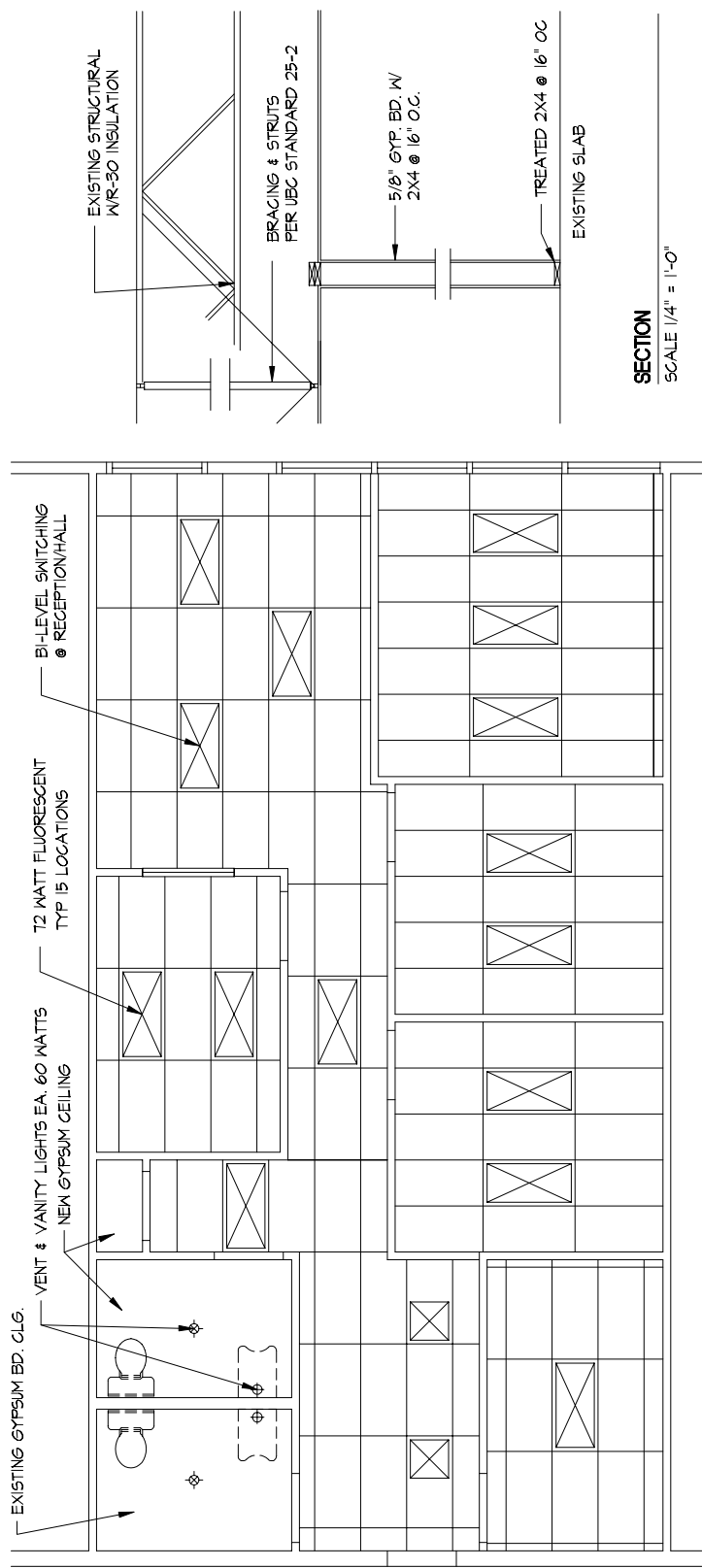
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

[NOTE: THIS DRAWING HAS BEEN REDUCED]

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LIGHTING PLAN/REFLECTED CLG PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

LIGHTING:
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT:
1200SF X 1.2 WATTS/SQ FT = 1440 WATTS

WATTS PROPOSED:
15 FIXTURES @ T2 WATTS = 1080 WATTS
2 FIXTURES @ 40 WATTS = 80 WATTS
4 FIXTURES @ 60 WATTS = 240 WATTS
1400 WATTS

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3. If you are applying for a Shell Modification Permit, or if your tenant improvement application includes structural work, the plans should reflect sufficient structural details for the proposed work.
4. A copy of the contractor's current registration needs to be included.
5. A portion of the fees is due at application and the remainder when the permit is issued.
6. A Certification of Applicant Status form, or Certification of Transfer of Applicant Status form when applicant is not owner (see Bulletin #8).
7. Affidavit for Application (see Bulletin #8).
8. Glass specifications and thermal envelope compliance documentation are required when adding additional glazing.

Other considerations

If you are a new tenant, check to see if the use you are proposing is allowed in the zone. Call zoning information at 206-296-6655.

A menu and fourth set of plans are required when food service preparation or sales occur. Only complete applications will be accepted. Call 206-296-6797 for an appointment to submit your application.

What other permits may be required?

Other permits that may be required include the following:

- ◆ Mechanical Permit (see Bulletin #36, *Mechanical Permits*)
- ◆ Sign Permit (see Bulletin #20A, *Zoning Code: Sign Requirements*)
- ◆ Installation or revision of a sprinkler system (see Bulletin #13, *Fire Systems Permits*)
- ◆ Installation or revision of a fire alarm system (see Bulletin #13, *Fire Systems Permits*)
- ◆ Hood permits and fire suppression system permits for hoods (frequently required in food service uses) (see Bulletin #36, *Mechanical Permits*)
- ◆ Electrical Permit from Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (call 206-248-6630 or 425-990-1400)
- ◆ Plumbing Permit from the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health (206-296-4722)

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Other bulletins and telephone numbers that may be helpful

Bulletin 1	Building and Development Permit Telephone Numbers
Bulletin 8	Commercial and Multi-family Building Permits
Bulletin 13	Fire Systems Permits
Bulletin 17A	Zoning Code: Overview and Summary
Bulletin 20A	Zoning Code: Sign Requirements
Bulletin 21	Sensitive Areas Review
Bulletin 27	Residential Energy Codes
Bulletin 36	Mechanical Permits
206-296-6600	DDES Information
206-296-6615	Commercial Building or Fire Inspector
206-296-6797	DDES Appointment Desk
206-248-6630 or 425-990-1400	Department of Labor and Industries
206-296-4722	Seattle-King County Department of Public Health



King County complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you require an accommodation to attend a meeting (two weeks notice) or require this information in Braille, audiocassette, or large print, please call 206-296-6693 or TDD 206-296-7217.